

Quick Strokes

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SPRING, 1982

Boyd and Kolb in person make presentations on Dvorak keying at West Coast Computer Faire

At about the same time that the paid circulation of this *Quick Strokes* was being mailed, two distinguished scholars were making oral presentations of their papers on different topics, both related to Dvorak keying, at the West Coast Computer Faire in San Francisco.

Waldo T. Boyd, of Geyserville, California, writer of many published articles on various themes, not always on Dvorak keying but always written at a Dvorak-arranged keyboard, discussed "Increasing Throughput with the Dvorak Keyboard".

Albert C. Kolb, teacher of personal typing at the Carmel Middle School, Monterey County, California, who is also a writer of magazine articles, reported on "Four Keyboards for Computers". There really are four distinct arrangements that are worthy of discussion and consideration.

Both speakers had Dvorak-arranged equipment on hand for display and demonstration. Both men are well skilled at Dvorak keying.

Both papers were to be published. The source is Computer Faire, 333 Swett Road, Woodside, CA 94062.

State Farm Insurance is now on the Dvorak keying roster

An application of Dvorak keying that has not been previously reported in these pages is at the State Farm Insurance Co. word processing center in Salem, Oregon.

The units are Vydec. Four of them are set up for Dvorak entry, although at the time we write, one of these was idle for lack of a printer.

This center is a favorite spot for school field trips. The center of the center, as the students see it, is always just one work station — the one where they find the Guinness Book world record holder Barbara Blackburn.

The intake capacity of that unit is among the fastest that she has sat at, she reports. Still, she has to take some pains in pacing to avoid outrunning it.

Other insurance word-processing centers where Dvorak keying is in daily application are the Portland office of Oregon Public Employees Retirement System, the Portland, Oregon, offices of Employee Benefits, and the home office of Union Mutual, Portland, Maine.

The manager of the Salem center of State Farm is Ardeth Jerde. The address is 4600 25th Ave. NE, Salem 97313.

From a graduate student at Teachers College, Columbia University

I had an interesting summer before last when I was doing transcribing for a small phototypesetting company which produces the PBS transcripts for MacNeil-Lehrer Report and other shows. The owner of the company had heard of the Dvorak arrangement — the one he was familiar with is the ASK version — and he set up a program for me which allowed me to use his Mergenthaler Linotype machine.

He didn't reprogram the number row, though, which occasionally caused some confusion for me as the key caps were the old QWERTY arrangement and I kept automatically using the MDSK pattern unless I looked at the keyboard to check the numbers. In spite of this, I worked up to a reasonable speed in transcribing and began to enjoy it.

Littlepaige Wemple
New York, NY



photo courtesy Timberlines magazine

Posed at her work station, Barbara Blackburn (see story at left, "State Farm...") smiles, perhaps recalling her student days at Huff Business College, Kansas City, where she made the switch from conventional keying to Dvorak and rose from mediocrity to excellence as an operator.

Another program for Dvorak variant keying appears in Creative Computing

The January, 1982, issue of *Creative Computing* contains an article, on pages 122 to 125, with diagram, spelling out a program for what the title calls "A DSK Keyboard for the Apple."

The author is Patrick Niesink, of 356 Lindsay St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 1H3, Canada. After the directions, he remarks, "Now that you have a DSK keyboard, all you have to do is learn to type on it," and "... drawbacks are minimal when compared to the savings in tedium, wasted time, and sore fingers achieved by using a modern, efficient Dvorak Simplified Keyboard."

The diagram shows conventional order for the digits, which the Dvorak movement has been obliged to accept, and also shows hyphen and apostrophe in the digit row and in the upper-case shift condition. Niesink explains that these locations were assigned so as to keep the left and right arrow points in their Apple locations.

It is probably of no use to try to preserve the distinction between "DSK", indicating digits in rational order, and "ASK" with its conventional digit row. Every variant that has the alphabet in Dvorak order is likely to be called DSK or Dvorak.

Creative Computing is sold in some computer stores and at the larger newsstands. The editorial offices are at 39 Hanover Ave., Morris Plains, NJ 07950.

Independent cartographer needs typing, chooses a Dvorak arrangement

By James Chaffee

Some time in 1975 an article appeared in the local press announcing that Smith-Corona was making the Dvorak keyboard available. At that time I did not even type on Qwerty. I had heard all the stories in high school of boys (good students or not) who just could not learn to type. Not only did I have a GPA to protect, but I had a manual dexterity of about zero, so the ground was set for a deep phobia. As must be true of at least a few other people typing became synonymous with making a fool of myself.

When the word about Dvorak first reached me I was eager to overcome this fear, and I saw this new keyboard as a catalyst. After a period of indecision and another period of delay by the company and the dealer, my typewriter arrived.

It came with a brief twelve-lesson instruction booklet, which contained an address for obtaining *Synergistic Typing*. The publisher referred me back to SCM, who in turn offered Dr. Dvorak's address as a last resort. Dr. Dvorak had only very recently died, and his widow sent me a very kind note informing me of that fact.

In the meantime, I had learned to type passably on my ASK and was convinced that if there was anyone else who typed on one, he was as isolated as I was. It was only through a short article in one of the journals I read, by David Pressman, that I learned of your existence and the DIF.

Congratulations on your work in providing a forum and self-image to the Dvorak community. I'm glad to be in from the cold.

Editorial note: Mr. Chaffee does business as The Picture Map Co., P.O. Box 141, San Francisco CA 94101.

An apt expression

Thanks to Stephen Israel, of New York, who cites *Science Digest* for January, 1982, page 108, column 33, under "No Nonsense" and sends the page! We quote, "Seymour Papert, an expert in artificial intelligence at MIT, has coined the term 'QWERTY phenomenon' for any practice to which people are committed that has no rational basis beyond its historical roots."

University of California San Diego gives reasons why an alphabetic arrangement gives poor results

Report No. 8106 from the Center for Human Information Processing, La Jolla, California, dated November, 1981, is of some value as a refutation of the folk wisdom about another arbitrary arrangement, the alphabet, as a substitute for the conventional typewriter keyboard.

The title, however, misstates the scope of the investigation. It reads, "Why Alphabetic Keyboards are not Easy to Use: Keyboard Layout Doesn't Much Matter." There is, indeed, some evidence to show why alphabetical arrangements are as difficult as q, w, e, r, t, y is for untrained students. There is no shred that leads to the conclusion that layout does not matter.

Howard Hudson, of Decatur, Georgia, Dvorak-skilled transcriber, reported in January, 1982, "I had to type 552 pages in three days last week for a Chicago attorney." Who else could have done it, even in a case of "have to"? Some other operator with Dvorak skill might match such performance under equal motivation, but not, for certain, any operator whose skill is at qwerty or any other arbitrary arrangement. Hudson's Selectric II has nine-pitch type, but even so . . .

The authors are Donald A. Norman and Diane Fisher. The source is Donald A. Norman, Program in Cognitive Science C-015; University of California, San Diego; La Jolla, California 92030.

Some readers may dismiss Hudson's evidence and similar accounts as anecdotal. Nevertheless, it is fact; whereas, computer simulation, no matter how skillfully sliced, is and remains supposition.

A "Firestorm Chat" in Texas sets the paper swirling on an Oregon college campus

Gary North, of Tyler, Texas, who markets his "Firestorm Chats" on tape, has devoted one of them to the Dvorak arrangement for characters on keyboards. As a direct result, mail addressed to Portland Community College, in Oregon, has increased remarkably.

The addressee is Instructor Sue George, named in the chat as the source of a learning kit for the better arrangement. Queries have come in from Gaffney, South Carolina, from Chattanooga, Tennessee, and from Fort Worth and Fort Hood, both in Texas, that Quick Strokes knew of in January. Some inquire also about sources for office equipment with a Dvorak arrangement built in.

North was the writer of an article on Dvorak keying that appeared in the *Whole World Epilog* several years ago. He was later on the staff of a Texas Congressman and recently has been writing for the American Bureau of Economic Research. His address is P.O. Box 7999, Tyler TX 75711.

The PCC address is 12000 SW 49th Ave., Portland, OR 97219.

Dvorak-skilled operator on Tektronix terminal

By Joe Gamble

Enclosed find check for subscription.

Since 1948 I have been a user of Dvorak keyboard typewriters. Now I have a Dvorak keyboard on a Tektronix 4025 where I work. I had not, however, heard of your publication until Steve Anderson wrote me about it.

I hope it contains information on Dvorak keyboard word processors.

Is there any possibility of getting back issues?

(Editorial note: Back issues are \$2 per volume from Quick Strokes, P.O. Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691. Most volumes consist of four issues, some of only three.)

The Digital PDP-11 computer which I am now using does the conversion from qwerty to Dvorak (ASK) in about 5.6 seconds. When I was on CYBER, it took longer because the data link was slower. With help, I also developed a program which programmed a set of user-defined extra keys which would go back and forth between qwerty and Dvorak. This is even faster and works even when the terminal is disconnected from the computer. This ability is lost, however, when the terminal is turned off and it must be reprogrammed when connected. I am not now using it, because I have better uses for the user-defined keys.

It appears probable that the Dvorak keyboard will become widely used when most or all of the word processors and computer terminals have programmable keyboards. As technology advances, this is sure to happen. I hope you can help it along a little.

I am a technical writer for Textronix Inc. at Beaverton, Oregon. I write manuals for one of our projects. Right now, I use the terminal and computer mostly as a word processor.

Conversion to Dvorak of 4024/4025 Tektronix computer terminals may be done in the field. All the basic keys are programmable to both-hand, left-hand, or right-hand Dvorak or any other arrangement.

DVORAK SELECTRIC ELEMENT — Please specify pica or elite type; please specify whether for a Selectric, a Selectric I or II, or a Selectric III. Arrangement is close to the classic Dvorak, digits reading, left to right, 7, 5, 3, 1, 9 for the left hand and, right to left, 8, 6, 4, 2, 0 for the right hand. \$111 dollars at Speedy Keyboard Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691, telephone 916-446-3377. A starting manual, the Simplified Keyboard Supplement, is included. Two sheets of 77 half-inch round press-on labels with the alphabet, extra vowels, punctuation, and digits are included. Pairing of digits and special symbols corresponds to the Dvorak Selectric arrangement. Delivery in two weeks after receipt of order and payment. In California, add 6% tax.

Mills of the American National Standards Institute are still grinding, fine although slowly

The long-pending American National standard for an alternative arrangement for alphanumeric keyboards, designated now as "BSR X4.22-198X" has been published twice in *Standards Action*, a twice-monthly organ of the American National Standards Institute, 1430 Broadway, New York NY 10018.

The first publication did draw an objection, from a subcommittee of American National Standards Committee X3-X4, 1828 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20036. The protest was not substantive, calling only for an alteration in the text and not for a change in the diagram. The alteration has been made, by the X3-X4 staff, and the republication was in the December 25, 1981, issue of *Standards Action*.

By early May, 1982, the rebalot by the parent committee should have been completed, and the working group where this BSR document originated can then meet to resolve negative ballots if there are any. The group is designated X4DSK. The BSR in the interim title means Board of Standards Review.

Copies may be obtained from the X3-X4 Secretariat, in care of Computer and Business Equipment Manufacturers' Association, 1828 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20036. Orders must include a mailing label and advance payment of \$10.

FOR RENT — Videotape, "Typewriters: Dvorak Made a Better One", narrated by Albert C. Kolb, Carmel (California) Middle School, time 14 minutes and 19 seconds. Narrator and secretary demonstrate on interesting and innovative alternative to the standard keyboard. Motivates student interest in the typewriter and in developing skills. In UCA 30 cassette. Per week \$10. Shipping weight 1 lb., 12 ozs. Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

Ronald Watson, Dvorak keyboard user-operator, teacher, salesman, writer, speaker, international organizer, dead in Australia

The letter which follows was received in February by Albert C. Kolb, of Seaside, California:

Dear Al,

Hello from Sydney, Australia. I'm sorry that our first communication must be on such a sad note but I must tell you that my father, Ron, died on the 17th January from stomach cancer. He was admitted to hospital just ten days before he died, peacefully, in his sleep. It seemed he never had infectious hepatitis but mechanical hepatitis due to a large malignant tumor in his liver. He showed bravery, intelligence, and courage that I have come to expect from him.

I'm sorry I've been so long in notifying you but as you can imagine the unexpected loss was a great shock to us all. The man I loved and respected most in this world was to me, I thought, immortal and I never contemplated his death.

I attend university full time but I am receiving the occasional request and enquiry into the keyboard which I am trying to reply to, to the best of my ability. I will try to assimilate some of the ASK information so the cause will not be lost completely as I know dad would want it to be.

Yours sincerely, David Watson, P.O. Box 92, Avalon Beach, NSW 2107, Australia.

FOR RENT — Motion picture film, "Motion Study of the Dvorak Simplified Keyboard", 16 mm., black and white, silent, 20 minutes. Old but good. View it more than once, the better to appreciate the difference in hand position. \$10 per week. Order from Quick Strokes, Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691.



Coronamatic™ 8000

Heavy-duty office typewriter, from Smith-Corona.....\$535

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This is the Smith-Corona variant of the famous Dvorak arrangement of characters on keys — easy to learn and to teach, easy to switch to from the arbitrary conventional arrangement, intrinsically more accurate, and much faster.

Delivery in 120 days after receipt of order and payment. Please specify pica or elite type. Please leave the color combination unspecified.

Speedy Keyboard Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 643

West Sacramento, California 95691
Telephone 916-446-3377

Condolences go to the Watson survivors

Ronald Watson, whose death is reported in this issue, was an early starter and a strong finisher. A friend and faithful correspondent with Hermione Dvorak and the late August, he kept in touch for twenty years. During his last illness, which kept him in bed for several months, he continued his campaign for the International Word Productivity Contests without complaint except about tardy responses to his aérograms to addresses outside Australia.

A Yorkshireman by birth, a carpenter by trade, and a salesman by profession, Watson was also a public relations expert. He was the source for many newspaper stories and magazine articles on topics related to keyboard efficiency. His public speeches at various gatherings in Australia and England stood the Dvorak movement in good stead.

Phil and Harriet Davis, who make up the staff of *Quick Strokes*, were fortunate enough to be hosts to Watson on both his tours of the United States. We cannot do better than to quote Barbara Blackburn, writing to David Watson and his brother and sister, for herself and the four younger Blackburns, "You have my deepest sympathy — all of us who loved him here in America will miss him — and certainly his beloved Dvorak typewriter keyboard enthusiasm is going to miss him the most!"

Harvard University Gazette interviews a keyboard expert

Richard Land, research associate in engineering at Harvard University, calls attention to "one remnant of 19th-century technology" in an interview starting on page 1 of the *Harvard University Gazette* for December 4, 1981. The remnant is the misarrangement of characters on the typewriter keyboard.

Land compares the conventional arrangement to a ball and chain dragging clerical workers back. The article is illustrated with a photo showing the classic Dvorak keyboard. Land has made it clear, however, that variants with electric-typewriter pairing and conventional digits are on the market.

"Suppose we get even a five-percent improvement in speed" by retraining typists on the alternative arrangement, Land is quoted. "In a week's time, we could gain half a typist. But the reason I push is that you make fewer errors, which is really important in work on computers."

Well, yes. Where is accuracy not important? And yes, five per cent is half of a tenth, so that with ten operators the boss gains half of the input of one of them.

Only, it would be better to speak of training time equivalent to more nearly two weeks' time, administered judiciously, and without expecting a uniform and immediate pickup in speed. That builds up over time, in increments that vary widely from one operator to another.

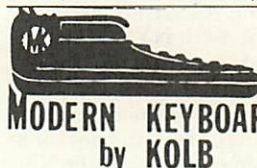
Land heads the instructional laboratories for the Division of Applied Sciences. The *Gazette* is published by the university and is widely distributed.

Boyd and Kolb in person make presentations

Waldo T. Boyd, of Geyserville, California, writer of many published articles, discussed "Increasing Throughput with the Dvorak Keyboard" at the West Coast Computer Faire in San Francisco on March 19 to 21, 1981.

Albert C. Kolb, teacher of personal typing at the Carmel Middle School, reported on "Four Keyboards for Computers".

Both papers were to be published. The source is Computer Faire, 333 Swett Road, Woodside, CA 94062.



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1770 Juarez St., Seaside, CA 93955
(408) 394-4284

FOR SALE — "There Is a Better Typewriter Keyboard", reprint of August Dvorak's 1943 article in *National Business Education Quarterly*, 16 pages including some additional material. Staples rusted, paper and printing ok. \$3, first-class postage paid. *Quick Strokes*, P.O. Box 643, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

World Future Society will meet in July and consider the role of Dvorak keyboard input

"Communications and Future" is the theme for the Fourth General Assembly of the World Future Society, to be held at the Sheraton Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. on the 18th to the 22nd of July, 1982. This society is not to be confused with the ancient prophetess, the Sybil, who foresaw only the world crumbled into ashes.

They think the future might even be better than the present or the past. A prominent student of alphanumeric keyboard arrangements, Waldo T. Boyd, of Geyserville, California, has complied with the Futurists' invitation and turned in a paper on the Dvorak arrangement.

Papers from this assembly will be published afterward. The source is World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814-5089.

Boyd was invited also to present his paper orally and to put on a demonstration of input from a Dvorak keyboard. Boyd would gladly do so if some progressive vendor would sponsor the trip.

Research paper received

"Handi-Keys — A System for a Personalized Keyboard." From the abstract, (the q, w, e, r, t, y) "illogical and inefficient arrangement is a hindrance to rapid data entry into a computer or word processor . . . The system consists of two BASIC programs. The first program accepts any text as input and gives a statistical analysis of keys, rows, fingers, and hands as output. The second redefines the keyboard to the user's specifications." Source, R. S. McCuiston, Department of Mathematics, Pensacola Junior College, 1000 College Blvd., Pensacola FL 32504.

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